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THE NEW RUSSIAN BOURGEOISIE

By Norman Hapgood

In looking to the future and in determining our policy toward Russia one great fact must be always held in mind. In spite of the fact that it has the first Communist government, Russia today is a bourgeois country to a greater extent than ever before. A new bourgeoisie has arisen which promises to be superior in efficiency and ultimate power to the old bourgeoisie that existed before the revolution of 1917. The political power, to be sure, is in the hands of a group of men whose firm purpose is to abolish the bourgeoisie. It is when we look beneath the surface at the inner life that we find private enterprises exercising initiative and laying the foundations of an important national commerce, in a way that was not seen under the old régime. From 1905 on, all the conditions have been such as made some kind of revolution inevitable. The strivings of the people toward development were high-handedly checked by a government that was inadequate both for the practical needs of the people and for their aspirations. The political power was to a large extent influenced by a class whose interests were in sharp conflict with the peasants, who were predominant both in numbers and in real importance. The government represented the landlords, and the landlords were the chief enemies of the peasants. Over 80 per cent of the entire population was the peasantry. The government endeavored in every way to strengthen the privileges of the landlords against the gropings of the peasants. The landlords had no progressive power or leadership. Suppression was the only known method of control. Suspicion ruled everywhere. Any normal activity of the people, any free expression, was to them to be viewed with distrust, and, as far as possible, to be prevented.

Even personal liberty in the most ordinary affairs of life did not exist. The peasant was not allowed to leave his village for more than one year. Anyone who made a journey was compelled to explain to the police the reason for his journey and the kind of activity that made it necessary for him to go to another place. This passport system was used to make difficult any economic enterprise of the peasant other than the tilling of his own land. Any kind of corporate business enterprise was submitted to such rigid rules of control as almost to mean prevention. Anybody who asked to start in any kind of business was obliged to obtain special permission from the government in the form of a certificate for which a sufficiently high charge was made to constitute a genuine obstacle. According to the prices charged for these privileges, the merchants were divided into classes, first, second, third, according to the trading rights which they desired. This legislation was used as a check through the manner in which it was carried out. One of the most salient governmental devices to prevent normal change was the nobles' bank, whose business it was to maintain the economic power of the aristocracy. This bank gave loans to the landlords for the definite purpose of preventing the passing of their lands into other hands. The landlord class was so inefficient that these loans did not, on the whole, constitute a reasonable enterprise but a government subsidy, and it was the taxpayer who paid for the privilege of being ruled over by a worthless landlord class. Had it not been for this special protection, the lands would have tended to pass naturally from the landlords into the hands of the peasants. On the other hand, the peasants themselves did not cultivate their land in a modern way largely because they were without facilities for learning newer methods of agriculture. Public instruction was controlled for the purpose of preventing progress. The question of education was turned by the state over to the clergy. The aim of the lower schools was to maintain the minds of the peasantry in the same mold as that of their ancestors. The school boy was taught to deem an autocracy a natural institution and the schools

attempted to prevent the acquisition of any knowledge that might raise in his mind doubts about the existing system.

There were, to be sure, certain self-governing institutions, the Zemstvos and state councils, that endeavored to improve the practical education of the people, but their activities were limited. In the first place, they were controlled by government officials who had the right of veto, and, in the second place, the members were chosen by an imperfect election law that prevented the participation of the majority of the population in the elections. The history of these bodies is a history of striving with the imperial government, which prevented or molested the passage of the most natural measures, as for example measures to institute evening schools, or to encourage the foundation of societies for mutual instruction.

Just because social study was not permitted in the schools it was introduced in secret to the laboring classes. The young working men, who had not received any real education in the lower schools, were appealed to by proclamations and brochures secretly distributed, and this method of education naturally led to the formation of an extreme socialistic doctrine. It was because the Russian ruling class allowed no natural democratic expression, no openness of discussion, that there grew up the serious students of extreme socialistic theories who later became the leaders of the Bolshevik government.

The great war came without warning. There is no doubt that it was popular in the earlier months, but it was not popular on thought-out principles. It was welcomed as the end of a tension that was growing intolerable. Also there was a considerable amount of national feeling which had begun to form after the war with Japan. The important fact connected with the entrance of Russia into the war, however, was that it brought about a compulsory yielding by the government to the powers of the people. The government was unable to carry on the war without allowing the population to function; and when new freedom was felt the old edifice was doomed.

The government now faced problems surpassing its power of action. It was compelled to appeal for help to all of the self-governing institutions in the country. The sanitary work was turned over to the Zemstvos and municipal councils, as was the furnishing of supplies to the population. By the necessities of the case, therefore, these democratic bodies took over a great part of government power, but it was not taken over on a basis of confidence and of trustful coöperation. The government, at the same time that it was reluctantly encouraging the activities of both of these bodies, nevertheless increased the bitterness of the people doing the work by its continuous expressions of suspicion, by its retention of unnecessary control, and by its lack of real adaptability.

After the first military successes, there came heavy blows, due to the lack of ammunition and to failings of the general staff. The relatives of the 16,000,000 men felt that the lives of their soldiers were exposed not only to the military dangers that were inevitable, but to still greater dangers created by inefficiency. Up to this time the press had not been an effective force for criticism, but now it took its part in the general comment. The population began to take an interest in the news. Nearly every family had somebody at the front, and the other members of the family went to the newspapers in an effort to keep up with military events. The circulation of the *Russian Word*, a popular paper in Moscow, rose, in two months, from 200,000 to 1,000,000, and this increase in circulation came from the villages, which, before the war, had not used any newspapers at all. Into the most primitive places of Russia the press brought echoes of the passionate political discussions which were going on in the great cities. This increase in newspaper reading afforded to a primitive country a sight of rapidly increasing troubles, and it gave clearness to a bitterness that had previously lacked direction.

Rumors were started by the enemy that there was not only inefficiency but treachery in the government, and these rumors went back to the villages and the cities. It began to be widespread that the empress was in sympathy

with the enemy and that ministers were appointed because of their German sympathies. At the time that Strumer was being criticized a woman I know, high up in the old Russian aristocracy, went to the empress and told her that she must stop allowing criticism of her ministers, because if criticism were allowed to begin at any point it might reach the throne itself, and this woman was one of many. There was spread a story that the Grand Duke Nicholas after his victories in Austria refused a complimentary sword from the tsar, on the ground that a retreat was inevitable and that it was purposely made inevitable by the government. Few indeed were the members of the ruling class who realized that criticism could not be dammed up and that the only possible solution lay in seeking another method of giving orderly expression to the popular sentiment.

While these intellectual changes were being brought about with great rapidity, the economic destruction caused by the war was enormous. Although 16,000,000 men had been mobilized, the greater part spent their time in training camps, without even uniforms. The training in the camps did not take much of their time and there arose, inevitably, critical groups of young men with able minds who resented being taken from their families and forced to stop the work of the farm. All were impressed by the rumors that reached them from the front and were by them scattered through the villages. Thus the training camps became explosive centers where, more than anywhere else, the revolution was prepared. Industry, which was upset by taking so many men from work had, even before the war, been in bad condition. The Russian railroad system had never been adequate to the needs of the country. It now became monopolized for military purposes. A natural result was diminution in the food supply of the cities.

The minds of the peasant soldiers went through a very simple process. They saw that they could not be victorious without artillery, aeroplanes and other machinery used by the Germans. They lost hope, and their conclusion was that the war should end. Such was the situation which, a few months later, Kerenski explained with all of his

eloquence to the entente governments, but it was a situation which they did not care to recognize; still less to act upon in the way that Kerenski advised.

The more intelligent and progressive people in Russia were put by these events in a difficult situation. Their organized efforts had made it possible for the army to make as good a showing as it had made. They wished to get rid of the unpopular and impotent government, but they felt that to change the government too sharply in the middle of the war would be extremely dangerous, even if it were possible. Taking advantage of this difficulty, supporters of the old government treated as a crime any suggestion of thoroughgoing reform. It was obvious, however, that things could not go on as they had been going. The situation was graphically expressed by Maklakov, the Russian ambassador to France, who said that the situation in the Russian state reminded him of how he would feel if he were running down a mountain in an automobile containing his family and driven by a chauffeur who was drunk. He could not change his chauffeur, nor could he have any confidence from moment to moment that the car would not be overturned and everybody destroyed. Later on Maklakov said to me that the only course that Russia could pursue was to split into pieces and slowly come together. The fact that the intelligent and progressive bourgeoisie was compelled to associate with a government which it despised and distrusted had the effect of turning the peasants, the army, and the families in the villages against the bourgeoisie, because they saw it taking part in the conduct of the war and, in appearance, coöperating with the government.

When the revolution of March, 1917, came, therefore, not only was the government exhausted and hated, but the bourgeoisie also was exhausted and compromised. The situation had to develop rapidly from bad to worse in order to make it possible for the revolution of November to be ushered in. The bourgeoisie had no desire for revolution, but it was, nevertheless, compelled by events to take over the power in March. It had small confidence in itself and

had been preoccupied with the international problems of the war. It did not possess the confidence of the population. The soldiers distrusted practically everybody who belonged to the upper classes. It was under such conditions that the government of the bourgeoisie headed by Prince Lvov and, later, the moderate socialistic government of Kerenski were compelled to face the most tremendous military problems and the most difficult agrarian problems. They saw before them the menace of an economic catastrophe. They saw the people educated in a few months to the realization of startling facts which they had been unable to see clearly during centuries of the old régime. It is no cause for wonder that the governments of the bourgeoisie and the moderate socialists failed under these conditions. Their work was of a high order. The difficulty was that anything in any way reminiscent of the old régime became unacceptable to the people. The power was now seized by an organization of extreme socialists, the majoritaires of the Russian Socialist Democratic party, whom we know as Bolsheviks. Not only were they free from any of the old considerations, and from any worry about the loss of the war, but they were under no compulsion to make their immediate steps consistent with their ultimate aims. They were men of action who were content to seize the power, and use it in a way that was most satisfactory to the peasants, planning to introduce their political ideas at an opportune moment.

The government of moderates which had taken charge after the fall of the tsar was in a position where what it said to the people could not be satisfactory. It said, in substance: "The old government was a bad government and you did not live as other men. You were compelled by the government to make war and also to give up your attempt to get the land away from the landlords. Now you have made a revolution. You are free men. We, the government, will endeavor to run the country later, but all we can say to you at present is just what the old government said to you. You must push the war to a victorious conclusion and you must give up hope of any

immediate distribution of the land. The land question can only be settled by a constituent assembly and the best we can promise is that we will call that assembly as soon as it is possible."

For this unsatisfying response, the Bolsheviki substituted a much more drastic appeal. They said: "The important result of the war is that there has been a revolution in Russia, and this will be followed by similar revolutions in other countries. You can see a revolution; you can feel it; you know what it means. It means that you cannot be compelled to fight if you do not want to fight. In a short time—in a few weeks—a similar situation will be brought about in Germany, and then in the entente countries. Finally all the peasants and the working men will be brothers. The war was waged merely in the interests of the rich and powerful. To the poor the war meant only an opportunity to be killed by one another without knowing why they were doing it. Why should you take the offensive today and go out to be killed if, in a couple of weeks, the war will be ended by a revolution in Germany?"

On the second great question, that of the land, the Bolsheviki took the following attitude:

"You are the great majority of the people and you desire the land. You say that it is right that you should have it. You are, perforce, all soldiers, and you believe that you have paid for this land by terrible sacrifices at the front. The present bourgeois government promises you a constituent assembly, but you are the majority of the people and, therefore, you should have the majority in that assembly. Therefore, as you are the majority, the decision rests with you and not with them."

It is obvious that in these arguments the Bolsheviki had an enormous advantage over the exponents of bourgeois liberalism. The solution of the economic question was impossible from the point of view of the liberal government because it was bound to take so many things into consideration, whereas the Bolsheviki, unhampered either by a desire to win the war or by a desire to preserve existing institutions, could apply themselves directly to the fundamental wishes of the people.

The Bolsheviks, moreover, were not the only enemies at work to undermine the attempt to follow the despotic Russian government with a modern liberal government. The reactionary elements were also at work seeking the failure of the liberals and the moderate socialists. Indeed, many of them preferred the Bolsheviks to the liberals, believing that in a short time military dictatorship would result. The defeat of Kerenski's government was immediately brought about by an attempt of the military groups to seize the power. That movement was hailed with enthusiasm throughout the world because the world in general was full of the idea that a "strong man" would be the solution of the Russian problem. The Kornilov movement and similar movements tended to disorganize the army and to increase the suspicions of the soldiers. Thus the right prepared the road for the extreme left, and when the Bolsheviks created a military riot in Petrograd, the officers failed to rally to the Kerenski régime, and made it possible for the Bolsheviks to take possession of Petrograd.

After seizing the power, the Bolsheviks were faced with the following problems:

1. The organization of their administration.
2. Peace with Germany.
3. The agrarian question.
4. The realization of their program of a socialist state in Russia and the stimulation of the revolutionary movement by the proletariat abroad.

The first question seemed almost insurmountable. All of the old government officials deserted their posts. Practically the only things seized by the Bolsheviks at first were the various government institutions. There were few, it seemed, who really understood their program and the adherents who flocked to them were elements which could not be trusted without further tests. Under these conditions the Bolsheviks acted with enormous energy. They set themselves to sending out instructions and propaganda and in every way endeavored to spread knowledge of their program, but they particularly, from the beginning until now, concentrated on effort, on action, on reconstruction, as far as the war permitted.

Regarding peace with Germany, it is known that the Germans began by accepting one principle of the Bolshevik dictatorship, no annexations or indemnities and the self determination of nations. During the conference at Brest Litovsk, what the Bolsheviks sought was not so much practical results as to make the situation clear to all Europe. It is possible that the Germans woke up too late to what these Bolshevik plans were likely to mean. At any rate, the conference was broken up by an act of violation on the part of the Germans. To this violation, the Bolshevik government was compelled to submit. In doing so, it issued proclamations stating its position. When peace was concluded, the Bolsheviks faced the problem of accepting terms which would make it almost impossible for them to carry out a program of social revolution. In the face of this new difficulty they adopted a shrewd policy. They appointed various commissions to meet Germany on the different aspects of the treaty, such as the exchange of prisoners, the restoration of economic relations, the payment of indemnity. Some of these commissions were composed of men who were incompetent to handle such matters. The Germans found themselves unable to obtain any positive decisions or settlements. The Bolshevik representatives were able to talk at great length, but they knew nothing. Six months were wasted and the only thing the Germans obtained was 100,000,000 gold roubles, which were later taken away from them by the allies' commissioners.

Later on the Bolsheviks used these methods with the Germans in the Ukraine. By the same dilatory tactics, they prepared a situation in the Ukraine by which they were able to meet the German occupation with a strong Bolshevik movement. We know now that Ludendorff and the German generals attribute the collapse of the German armies largely to the Russian example.

In facing the agrarian question also the Bolsheviks proceeded according to their practical philosophy of not endeavoring to control events to a greater extent than was possible, but of taking advantage of the direction in which events

themselves were moving. They sent out instructors with proclamations and other literature. These instructors endeavored to advise the peasants as to what they should do with the lands of the former landlords. Practically, however, the peasants were not much influenced by this advice. They took over the land by forming committees of their own. When they had taken it they distributed it among their members, following a spirit of private property which was essentially opposed to the action of nationalization and socialization advised by the Bolsheviki.

The course taken by the peasants was the natural application of the ideas about land that had already prevailed. Each village took the land away from the former landlord in that particular region. Therefore, some villages received a large amount for distribution and others received little. In some places, the land of the richer peasants was also seized and distributed among the poorer peasants. There were some differences between the villages on the ground of unequal opportunity, and these differences were increased by soldiers who returned after the land had been distributed and asked in vain for their share. These differences, however, were, on the whole, of minor importance, for it was not long before order was restored in the villages. An important generalization is that on the whole the larger share of the land went to the more able and intelligent peasants, and there is no sign thus far that the Bolsheviki have been able to check this drift.

Now, coming to the last of the five points, the realization of their general program, we find the Bolsheviki endeavoring to usher in their principles of governmental management of industry and trade by first establishing workingmen's control of various industries and enterprises which were declared to be nationalized. They formed workingmen's committees which sent representatives to the central bodies which were supposed to represent the state. Each committee represented some particular industry or trade. The first step was to take control of the stocks on hand. The second was the organization of the supplies of raw materials to further the production of commodities. One

immediate result was the problem of supplying food to the big cities. The plan was to solve this problem by establishing a state monopoly in grain, flour, meat and other necessities which were to be delivered to the government by the agrarian population at a fixed price. Through the central committees, which had branches in the districts and villages, a study was made of the amount of food immediately at hand and the amount available in the rural districts. This program did not work to any considerable extent. In the main the business of the country continued to be done in the old way. The Bolsheviks immediately discovered that the workingmen's committees were inefficient. They were not trained to take control of food or to keep up production. They also saw that transportation was being disrupted as demobilization went on. The soldiers seized all the raw material they could before they returned home. The total lack of organization resulted in an endeavor to have the railroads controlled by local committees, but the workingmen had little idea of how to run railroads and still less of how to keep them in repair.

A large number of private businesses were disrupted by the attempt to nationalize trade and the communist state was not prepared to produce effective substitutes for what it had disturbed. The supply of food and other necessities was becoming low. Prices in the big cities began to soar. Immediately there was a startling difference between the prices the government was willing to pay for food and the prices the peasant could obtain by himself selling his food in the neighboring towns. This temptation to the peasant to do his own selling, coupled with disruption of transportation and the inefficacy of the state monopoly of food supplies, reduced its efficient operation almost to zero. Practically all the food was supplied by improvised methods of trade. The peasants carried their food to the big cities or sent it through intermediaries and exchanged it on the best terms they could obtain, carrying back whatever they had taken in exchange. They thus became known as "sackmen." In company with the demobilized soldiers, they crowded the trains to the cities and back to the vil-

lages, carrying food suspended from their shoulders, in one direction, and in the other direction burdened by the things which they had taken in payment. The only organizations which existed at this time to take charge of the food supply, which was exchanged in this improvised manner, were the coöperative organizations, and they, at that time, were not nationalized. There came to be only a small proportion of the population of Russia that was not in some way dependent for its welfare on some one or more of these coöperative institutions.

The city working man suffered because he did not possess anything with which to pay the peasant in exchange for food. A large part of the working population of Petrograd, Moscow and other big cities migrated to the villages. This diminution in numbers was seen by the outside world as if it had resulted entirely from starvation or murder, but in fact, almost any working man who had some relative in a village, who could get him started, gave up his job and went to the village, where he could at least get enough to eat.

There came about a situation in which the big cities were practically boycotted by the villages. The farmers were unwilling to sell at prices fixed by the government and they soon became unwilling to sell for paper money at all. The government could get a certain amount by requisition, but this amount was limited, as the peasant found many ways of thwarting the inspectors. He refused to produce more than he needed, or he reaped his grain but did not thresh it, so that it was difficult to carry away; he kept up a constant effort to get rid of his products to private people who would give him something he wanted instead of paper money. The fact that the peasant refused paper and demanded actual objects in exchange for his food caused all the city property that could be moved to be carried away into the villages. This transfer of property into the villages had a great educational influence, but economically it resulted in serious profiteering by the villages. Intelligent and active peasants were able to accumulate more real and tangible wealth than they ever had or dreamed of before. Also prosperity and actual tangible

possessions were obtained by the middlemen who sprang up to carry on this exchange between the country districts and the cities.

The new bourgeoisie, which is increasing in power and experience in Russia today, is, on the whole, made up of the more prosperous peasants who have acquired the characteristics that were connected with the former bourgeoisie and of the middlemen who have been able to do successful business in the newly created conditions of life in Russia. There is no more significant fact in the Russian situation than that this new bourgeoisie is greater in numbers than the bourgeoisie that existed before the war; it is physically stronger and more active; and its mental life is more promising. It includes not only people who are newly rich but people who are full of the desirable ambition of obtaining new training and a new mental outlook. There can be little doubt that trading in the supposedly socialist country of Russia is even now less controlled than it was during the war in England, for example, where the quality of many goods was controlled and where the maximum prices, in some instances, were also controlled. In Russia, though the tradesman's prices might be reduced in sporadic cases, nevertheless his activities in general were carried on with little hindrance at a maximum profit.

A good many people are mystified by the fact that the Bolsheviki have had such amazing success in political and military control and such small success in controlling the business habits of the people. It is unfortunate that the blockade maintained by the entente against any serious information about the real conditions in Russia has kept the rest of the world from understanding these tendencies, as this information, had it been obtainable, would have been a great elucidator of a wholesome kind, whereas the stories which were circulated in place of real information have done harm in all sorts of ways. Certainly they have formed concepts in foreign countries so unlike the facts that there is now great difficulty in bringing people to see the Russian situation as it is, and it will, therefore, be extremely difficult for the relations between Russia and the

rest of the world to be put on a basis of reality. The Bolsheviks held their power because there was no other organization confronting them which knew what it wanted and also wanted something acceptable to the majority of the people. The old régime wanted to go back, but that was impossible. The moderates had no effective program at all.

The question naturally arises, what is going to be the attitude of the new bourgeoisie toward the communist party, as the Bolsheviks now call themselves? The new bourgeoisie has acquired its wealth since the Soviet revolution and under the Bolshevik régime. Is it really hostile to that régime? In order to answer that question we have to look at the elements composing the new bourgeoisie. Let us take in the first place an element which sprang out of the Bolshevik bureaucracy itself. In trying to nationalize the stocks of goods, it was intended by the leaders that these goods should be handled with an equal consideration for all the people. The distribution was entrusted to central institutions of the government and to trade unions, but the leaders suffered a great disillusionment about the morals of mankind. The individuals who were to do the distributing acted often in a profiteering spirit. Much actual dishonesty was practiced and many people who have been in the employ of the government have succeeded in accumulating wealth, although the government has punished such faults, where it could, with severity. Moreover, the individuals to whom commodities were distributed did not simply use them for consumption, as the government intended, but went right ahead in the old trading manner to exchange any goods they could get hold of, wherever they could get them, with the motive of increasing their possessions. Suppose, for example, that a stock of cloth was nationalized and was about to be distributed. Everybody would undertake to get as much cloth as he could. Distribution was performed by the use of certificates, which were obtained by a person in the institution where he worked, in his trade union or factory, and a man was often able to get one certificate from his factory and

another one from his union. Also one man would sell his certificate to another man. Thus an individual would find himself with three certificates for overcoats. He would get the three overcoats and go out and sell two of them, or perhaps the three, in open market, at five hundred roubles apiece, and thus accumulate the small capital which was the first step towards whatever species of enterprise he might choose as the basis for accumulation of individual wealth. The men who started to make their fortunes in this way soon became aware of the insecurity of paper money, and of the necessity of having their wealth in something permanent, so they became buyers of jewels, houses and other kinds of personal property and of foreign money. So great was the exchange in diamonds and other objects that were at the same time valuable and easily transportable that dealers in these same valuables came to be called "karat men." The purchase of houses took place on a large scale. The purchase of personal property was so great that probably the greater part of the movables in Russia have changed owners. Many of these transactions took the form of contracts for a cash payment, the balance to be paid when the right of private property should be secure. Obviously, all these contracts constitute a continual menace to Bolshevik rule. There was a kind of underground stock exchange carrying on business between Moscow, Berlin and Kiev. The intermediaries in this were the German and Austrian ambassadors and consuls, as well as small officials in Poland and other border states. Now it seems obvious that people who were getting rich in this way would be interested not only in preventing the overthrow of the Bolsheviks by the armies representing the old régime, with the support of outside governments, but that they would, at the same time, be interested in preventing the government from making its powers effective in domestic life; and that they would not be interested in maintaining it when the time should arrive for a contest, not between Bolshevism and a return to former rights and powers, but between Bolshevism and a modern democratic and business point of view.

The people I have been describing form a branch of the new bourgeoisie which is to be distinguished from the large class of peasants who have become bourgeois in the sense that they have developed a point of view that is characteristic of the middle class. These peasants also have become anxious to enjoy their newly acquired property in ways that were so far beyond them before that they were little dreamed of. They have the will to produce as much as they can from their land and to sell it at the highest possible price in order to get more of the desirable things of life and this puts them in unalterable opposition to the Soviet government, which is undertaking to make them sell at a fixed price and to prevent any man from obtaining for himself special advantages in life. Lenin has fully recognized that this mentality of the peasant is a most deep-lying difficulty and he returns to it again and again in his speeches.

The psychology of the new bourgeoisie is something different from anything that has hitherto existed in Russia. Those who have recently entered the bourgeois psychology and the bourgeois material interests, coming largely from the peasants and the lower classes in the urban population, were those who before the revolution were in a low state of development. Their knowledge and their conditions of life were medieval. They knew nothing, or almost nothing, of books, newspapers, letters, railroads, trolleys, motors, telephones, modern lighting, modern water supply, hygiene or modern household conveniences. The expression "dark people," widely applied to the peasant in Russian literature, was justified by his entire ignorance of the world and of the conditions of his life, and by his consequent helplessness to affect his own fate. The war and the revolution have made a fundamental change. The peasant soldier, for the first time in his life, saw automobiles and learned to use them. He saw and used telephones. He became familiar with the telegraph and the motor cycle. He saw tractors, which must play a great part in the development of Russia. If he was one of those who marched into Germany and Austria, he came into contact with a village life which was

profoundly different from the life in his own Russian village. About three million Russians were captured in Germany and Austria, and they were kept in those countries and used as working men, which was the most rapid education they could have had. When they were wounded or ill, these peasants were treated in modern hospitals. In a few short years a new set of ideals and ambitions came to them. After the revolution of November, 1917, and during demobilization, the peasants roamed through the big cities. They crowded the best buildings, which were transformed into homes for soldiers. They visited the palaces. They went into the theatres. They were being educated almost by magic into a new world. Some buildings were injured and a great deal of property was taken away. The cost of such destruction, however, was as nothing compared with the billions that would have been required to educate the peasantry through many years up to the point that it reached in a few months.

Modern ideas can not be turned loose in so many million men without consequences. The sudden education has given to the people new aspirations and new imaginings. The more active peasant gets into his head ideas about technical equipment and about organization. He has become a soldier and a traveler, and he now dreams of replacing his horses, those weak working instruments, with the tractor which he learned to use in the artillery service. Formerly he took conditions as imposed by God, or at least by forces beyond his control. He now knows that conditions can be different from those to which he is accustomed. He wants more formal education and he also wants the technical equipment that is so large a part of modern culture. His hut no longer satisfies him. His means of communication no longer satisfy him. His amusements have become a reality to him. He knows what a moving picture is. He understands many other things than drudgery, oppression and Vodka. A wick floating around in oil will not longer go unquestioned. He is entering into the age of electricity. It is said that all Russia burns down every seven years, so wasteful has been

the system of light and heat. The Russian peasant was ignorant but not without intelligence and his ears were open to all these things in Germany, in the training camps, or in his adventures in the towns.

Why does not the central Bolshevik government destroy the new capitalistic society, growing up under its nose? It is trying to do so, but the really effective communist element in the government is small. In a country as disorganized as Russia, where the population is fatalistic and unaccustomed to self action, this minority has been strong enough to seize and maintain the rule, but it has not been strong enough to control thought, ambition, activity, or any of the deeper currents of life. The government has been able to maintain itself through great energy, practical ability, and intelligence in yielding to necessity. One of the methods by which it has maintained the fiction of communism while giving up the fact was through the use of certificates granting to the bearer certain rights, which has meant, in practice, the right to do private business. These certificates are gathered up and distributed in such a manner as to make it possible for an individual to carry on such business as he is capable of working up. Those who are unable to obtain certificates have nevertheless done business without permission. Many of the speculators in grain, for example, or in diamonds, enjoy full security from government molestation simply because they have a certificate that they are proletarians, employed in some factory. Certificates are required for transportation, for the right to live in big cities, for the right to purchase goods. A man, however, who has a certificate giving him the right to travel on some governmental errand, is likely to use that permission in order to buy goods for speculative purposes. There must be realized, in this connection, the importance of the fact that a large majority of the men actually employed in the government bureaus are not Bolsheviks by conviction and do not seek to coöperate in any way toward the strength of the socialistic order.

To be absolutely complete I ought, perhaps to explain the failure of all the attempts at outside intervention, but

this failure is now fairly well understood. It is realized that the armies encouraged and equipped by the entente represented nothing constructive in Russian life, but rather the old repressive class traditions and therefore never obtained any support from the population. The situation is far beyond such forces. It can be solved only from within, and probably less by violence than by the constant pressure of active individual desires in a new country of limitless resources.